

October 24, 1989

**Letter from Foreign Minister Petar Mladenov to the
Bulgarian Communist Party Central Committee**

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Summary:

Letter from Foreign Minister Petar Mladenov to the BCP CC criticizing Todor Zhivkov for bringing Bulgaria into economic crisis and doing everything to keep his family in power

Original Language:

Bulgarian

Contents:

Translation - English

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On 23 October 1989, I was scheduled to meet with the US ambassador [Sol Polansky] for a working lunch. Comrade Todor Zhivkov knew about this meeting, just as he knew about all my meetings and activities. The purpose of this session was to analyze the state of bilateral relations as they stood after the talks between [Deputy Foreign Minister Lyuben] Gotzev and First Deputy Secretary of State [Lawrence S.] Eagleberger and between Secretary of State [James] Baker and myself. That day—October 23—I had a meeting with the Swedish Minister of Foreign Trade at 11:30 p.m. When I reached my office at 12:30 p.m. —that is, just 10 minutes before my appointment with Ambassador Polansky—I was told that Todor Zhivkov had been trying to reach me by telephone. [Deputy Foreign Minister] Ivan Ganev was waiting in my secretary's office to see me. I asked him to come into my office and told my secretary to put me through to comrade Todor Zhivkov.

Comrade Ivan Ganev, without waiting for me to talk to comrade Zhivkov, told me that, at my meeting with US Ambassador Polansky, I had to protest against the gross US interference in our internal affairs. I had to say that this was unacceptable and that Perestroika could advance in Bulgaria only under Todor Zhivkov's leadership. I do not know who had instructed [Ganev] to speak to me in such an abrupt manner or what basis there might be for thinking that I was unclear how Perestroika should proceed in Bulgaria. Then comrade Todor Zhivkov called. He told me in an irritated tone that the US was grossly interfering in our internal affairs and that I had to express that bluntly—in other words, I had to repeat what Ganev had said. [Zhivkov] said that he knew about my appointment with the US ambassador and that such sessions, where we talked [only] gibberish, were unnecessary. I replied that it was not my intention to “talk gibberish” and that this meeting, which had been under preparation for a long time, was necessary for our country. I told him that I regretted his attitude but that I had always tried, in my work, to avoid damaging and irrelevant discussions. The extent to which I was permitted to do this was quite a different matter. Following my reply Todor Zhivkov adopted an altogether more respectful tone.

In connection with the episode I have just outlined, I request that the CC of the BCP and the Politburo take a position on this rude, indecorous, and totally unwarranted attack on me. I feel that, in view of the attitude of comrade Zhivkov—who is Secretary General of the CC of the BCP and Chairman of the State Council—I cannot continue to discharge my duties either as a member of the CC of the BCP and the Politburo or as Bulgaria's minister of foreign affairs. I request that this letter be taken to mean that I am resigning from these posts.

On analyzing my experience further, I have come to the conclusion that the real reason for comrade Zhivkov's irritation and rudeness is that he realizes that he has led our country into a deep economic, financial, and political crisis. He knows that his political agenda, which consists of deviousness and petty intrigues and is intended to keep himself and his family in power at all costs and for as long as possible, has succeeded in isolating Bulgaria from the rest of the world. We have even reached the point where we are estranged from the Soviet Union and we find ourselves entirely on our own, in the same pigs' trough as the rotten dictatorial family regime of Ceause^ocu. In a word, with his policies Zhivkov has forced Bulgaria outside the currents of our age.

Do you think that it is easy to be the foreign minister of such a state, headed by such a leader? I believe that it is finally time for the Politburo, Central Committee, and Party to take up these questions. One fact that we should all be aware of is that the Bulgarian public took up these questions long ago and now discusses them openly. I think that we all understand that the world has changed and that, if Bulgaria wants to be in tune with the rest of the world, it will have to conduct its political affairs in a modern way. If we do not believe in anything else, we should at least believe in the

Soviet Union and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Comrades, like all of you, I think I have a realistic picture of Zhivkov's moral character. I know that he will stop at nothing, not even the most outrageous crimes, when what he holds most sacred—his power—is impinged upon. I know that he will fabricate a mass of lies and insults against me. He has already done this [with others]. I do not even rule out his trying to take physical retribution against me or members of my family. If this does happen, the responsibility will be yours, my comrades, with whom I have worked so long, whom I respect, and for whom I have great esteem and affection. I wish to offer my sincere thanks to all the comrades that I have worked with

[Source: Archive of the Bulgarian Parliament, Sofia. Document obtained by Jordan Baev.]